GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PANCHAYATI RAJ
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1483
ANSWERED ON:22.08.2007
BACKWARD REGIONS GRANT FUND
Lagadapati Shri Rajagopal

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) the criteria adopted for identifying the districts under Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF) programme;

(b) whether several districts of Andhra Pradesh have not been included in BRGF;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether the Union Government has received any request from any Member of Parliament or any State Government for taking village as a unit, rather than taking district as a unit for effective implementation of the Fund;

(e) if so, the details therof; and

(f) the action taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR)

(a): Identification of districts for coverage under Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF) Programme was based on two sets of criteria, one adopted for coverage of districts under the programme of Rashtriya Sam Vikas Yojana (RSVY), National Food For Work Programme (NFFWP), National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (NREGP) in its first phase and the second, on the basis of recommendations of the Inter Ministry Task Group (IMTG) which identified 170 districts as backward on the basis of 17 socio-economic variables. An explanatory note on the criteria for selection of districts is at Annexure-I.

(b) & (c): 13 districts of Andhra Pradesh have been included in the BRGF programme on the basis of the selection criteria.

(d) to (f): The Hon'ble Member Shri L. Rajgopal, had suggested that a prosperous district could have backward habitations, therefore, Village Panchayat or Revenue Division instead of the district may be taken as a unit which could help effective percolation of schemes into the backward regions. A copy of the reply sent by the Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission to the Hon'ble Member is at Annexure-II. While the district has been taken as the unit for the selection of districts under the BRGF Programme, the Panchayats at the village level, intermediate and district level are the planning and implementing authorities in the rural areas under the programme. The programme Guidelines also prescribe that each State should indicate the normative formula used for the allocation of funds under BRGF Programme to each level of Panchayat and Urban Local Bodies.

Annexure-I

Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF) Programme −Criteria for Selection of Districts.

The Backward Regions Grant Fund Programme covers 250 districts. The list of 250 districts includes all the 200 districts covered by the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (NREGP) in its first phase and 170 districts identified as backward by the Inter- Ministry Task Group (IMTG) on Redressing Growing Regional Imbalances.

The list of 200 districts covered by the NREGP includes all the 147 districts covered by the Rashtriya Sam Vikas Yojana (RSVY) and 150 districts covered by the National Food For Work Programme (NFFWP). These districts were identified on the basis of an index of backwardness comprising three parameters with equal weights to each, namely, value of output per agricultural worker, agriculture wage rate and percentage of SC/ST population of the districts.

The list of 147 RSVY districts included 115 backward districts and 32 districts affected by left wing extremism, which were covered on the recommendation of the Ministry of Home Affairs. Out of 115 districts, 20 districts were reserved for special category States. It was decided that Goa, Pondicherry, Delhi and other Union Territories would not be covered under the programme. State capitals, districts with an urban agglomeration of over a million plus and districts, which had major cities of the States, were also excluded. The remaining 95 districts were distributed among the non-special category States. The number of districts per State, in case of non-special category States and Assam, was worked out on the basis of incidence of poverty. The allocation of districts among special category States, excluding Assam, was made on the basis of the total population as per 2001 census. The list of backward districts of non-special category States and Assam was finalized through an exercise taken up to rank the districts on an index of backwardness

on the basis of criteria mentioned above. The special category States (excluding Assam) were requested to indicate their backward districts for coverage under the programme, as the data for these criteria was not available.

The combined list of RSVY and NFFWP districts gave 195 districts. Five districts were identified separately to assess the impact of the programme in certain specific background and added to this list.

The Planning Commission set up the Inter-Ministry Task Group (IMTG) on Redressing Growing Regional Imbalances, in August 2004. The IMTG identified 170 districts as backward on the basis of 17 socio-economic variables.

Out of 170 IMTG districts, 120 districts were already covered in the list of 200 NREGP districts. The remaining 50 districts, not covered in the list of 200 NREGP districts, were added to the list, thus taking the total number to 250 for coverage under the BRGF.

Annexure- II

MONTEK SINGH AHLUWALIA

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN
PLANNING COMMISSION
INDIA

D.O.No.M-12053/19/VIP/2006-MLP/DCII/11/06/3621

September 7, 2006

Dear Shri Rajagopal,

Please refer to your letters of May 9 and May 26, 2006 to the Prime Minister, Minister for Commerce & Industry and Minister for Heavy Industries & Public Enterprises requesting for making the Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF) applicable to the backward villages of your Parliamentary Constituency by taking each Revenue Division as a unit instead of considering the whole district as one unit.

I have had the matter examined. The modalities of the BRGF have recently been approved by the Government. The scheme is for bringing about focussed development of identified backward districts. It may be mentioned that the Revenue Division was not considered as a unit for implementation even in the RSVY, the precursor of the BRGF. I also regret that Vijayawada district is not included in the 250 districts that would be covered under the BRGF as it did not meet the criteria for identifying the districts to be covered under the Fund.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-

(Montek Singh Ahluwalia)

Shri L.Rajagopal,
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